8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

584 fifth moon, or at some other convenient time, or attends one of the Miao feasts or festivals, or joins those playing on the mountain-sides at New Year time. Either the boy or the girl can make the first advances. The methods are to look lovingly 584 with the eyes, to squeeze hands and to speak loving words. 833 This is inconvenient if there are many people about. A boy may take a girl's handkerchief or a girl take a boy's. Then the person who gets the handkerchief goes away and the other says, "That person has taken my handkerchief. Stay here and I will go after him (or her)." Then in a quiet secluded place they make love. They say loving words, squeeze each other's hands, and embrace. A very great evidence of love is when one spits and the other swallows the spittal. Copulation often follows after which a handkerchief or a ring may be given by the boy to the girl or *vice versa* and they make a vow such as, "If you do not marry me and marry another, you must take this engagement present and eat it and then I will make no trouble." It is believed by the Ch'uan Miao men that copulation is one of the surest ways to a woman's affection.

584 Later the parents must be informed and they must secure go-betweens and arrange engagement presents and so on. If the parents do not agree, then the young people run away together or the man carries away the girl. Then all the neighbors and friends urge the parents to consent and if they still do not agree the neighbors and friends practically compel them to do so. The gifts to the girl's parents are generally less than they would have been if the young people had been engaged and married in the usual way.

Marriage by capture is not unknown among the Ch'uan Miao. Sometimes the girls are quite willing to get married in this way, and it is said that happy marriages often result. Sometimes a man uses this method because he is in love with the girl.

Parents generally desire to marry off their daughters, for it is the custom of marrying daughters into other homes that makes possible the securing of daughters-in-law to labor in the home and to give birth to descendants. Besides, the girl's parents receive engagement gifts and these are sometimes very valuable.

585 The bride generally weeps before leaving her parental home. Sometimes the sorrow is pretended but at other times she is sad and unwilling to go and the parents and friends and relatives have to use persuasion and even cocrcion. There is an old custom by which the parents actually push the girl out of the house. It is customary for the girl and her parents to weep, either as a matter of form or because of sincere sorrow.

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M 864 [825] told that the gibbons and monkeys, which animate the primeval forest in the neighborhood of the villages, put the babies in the laps of the women. Thus, among the Meau, the apes occupy the position of our stork. The explanation of the facts of life is given to the children of the Meau at the time of puberty at the latest.

A M 838 839 Onanism, homosexuality, and other sexual perversions are not found among either the Akha or the Meau. In most instances I did not even succeed in explaining these concepts to my informants, but when I did, they indignantly denied their occurrence, pointing out that the ancestors and spirits would prevent such perversions.

A M 836 626 [835] [831] Within the incest prohibitions, which apply not only to marriage, but also to free love (see the section, "Marriage Obstacles and Regulations," in this chapter) and are strictly observed, since a violation, according to the belief of the natives, would be immediately punished by the ancestors and spirits, the choice of a partner is completely free for the young men, whereas public opinion, but not the young men themselves, demands chastity of the girl. In practice, however, the demands of public opinion only result in secrecy, by boys as well as girls, about everything that is connected with sexual life.

A M 836 [832] [833] In the case of younger boys, the older girls take the initiative by flirtation, at which they are masterfully adept. It often happens that a girl who teaches a young boy /88/ the arts of love-making later on becomes his chief wife, since she most likely will become pregnant. Older boys, on the other hand, often assume the training of the young girls. We frequently had an opportunity to observe an open flirtation. My wife wrote about one such observation in her journal: "May, the chief's daughter, is probably about sixteen years old and is a typical 'teen-ager' in behavior. She giggles at the least thing or bursts into loud peals of laughter over a remark shouted at her by one of the boys. It is loudest, however, when several girls are assembled. They chatter and laugh so loudly and unrestrainedly, even when we are working nearby, that we are

M 832 883 123

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A more detailed description, however, shows that this is without
114 doubt a case of degeneracy about such as the proximity of any
548 major station may bring about. The author speaks of a "sacred
836 grove" in the neighborhood of Dongvan and continues: "If a European goes for a walk in this grove, one immediately sees several Meau girls descend from the neighboring hills where they work and offer the stroller their smiles and ... the rest..."
836 The unmarried, mature boys and girls of the Meau meet at suitable places along the edge of the fields or preferably at night in the field huts, but never in a dwelling. Dhuraratsadorn (2)

2. Page 168.

even maintains in his work that lovers are forbidden to meet in
[776 any dwelling for a tryst, because this would offend the house
688] spirits. If anyone were to violate this command, he would be fined by the village elders, and the fine would be handed over to the owner of the house. Thus if two young people wanted to meet, they would have to agree on a place somewhere in the jungle.

[343] The Chinese sources speak of special "love huts" of the young people, which girls, beginning at the age of ten, are allowed to visit (3).

3. Eberhard, II, p. 154.

[533] Singing and the jew's-harp (see the chapter, "Art," the section on "Music and Musical Instruments")play an important role at these meetings. The lovers hold hands and take turns singing to each other or playing the jew's-harp for hours.
● 853 Gradually the music-makers proceed to the sexual overtures, which are sometimes prolonged for hours. The partners stroke chest, body, and back, touch and stroke the organs, intertwine their legs, nuzzle each other, bite /90/ each other
[832] hard, and the like. The European kiss, on the other hand, is unknown, as among most primitive peoples, as is touching the mouth of the partner with one's own mouth, as well as erotic

/90 cont./

833 scratching, biting the eyelashes, nose-rubbing, in brief, the elements that play such a significant role among some inhabitants of the South Seas.

In contrast to the complicated overtures, the sexual act itself is simple and almost primitive. This is all the more strange in view of the fact that, unlike other peoples, there are no religious prohibitions to compel limitations in this respect, and otherwise the Meau are very imaginative. Nevertheless, they definitely reject all variations, in which, as is known, their Chinese neighbors are so unrivaled. The woman always lies on her back with her legs extended or slightly bent; the man lies on top of her, body against body, and their cheeks touch. Other positions are in part unknown and in part rejected. The Meau say of the Yau, who prefer the reverse position of [186] the woman: "They copulate like dogs, this is not good for human beings." -- After the ejaculation both partners sleep a while, and then the girl gets up softly and prepares a meal for her friend from provisions that she has brought along; they eat, and the love play begins anew.

836 The settlement of love intrigues is interesting and characteristic of the attitude of the Meau. If it becomes known that a girl has several lovers, the latter ask her jointly whose love she enjoyed first. The others then withdraw without protest, and a young man would never think of competing with another for his girl.

577 836 As long as sexual intercourse does not result in pregnancy no one thinks of marriage. An attempt is made, only for the sake of public opinion, to keep all love affairs secret. In such matters no one will censure a lie, which is otherwise so strictly condemned by the Meau. Now, the villages of the Meau in northern Thailand are small, moreover, the members of the village community are subject to the marriage prohibition, since most of them are related by blood or belong to the sib. Hence, the young men must often walk for hours or days to reach their beloved. If a young man then returns home dead-tired and his father, as is unlikely, should ask him where

/90 cont./

577 836 he has been, the boy will answer that he /91/ was delayed on the hunt. The girl will say that she spent the time looking for some object, or that she stayed overnight with a girl friend, or give some other such excuse. When I quite innocently asked a young man who was returning from his three-day excursion where he had been, he replied in all seriousness: "Wild pigs have devastated our rice field, and I lay in wait for them. They were too clever, however, and I could not catch them." At the same time, his father, who had overheard our conversation, winked at me and later whispered into my ear: "He returned dead-tired from a visit to his girl."

581 For the Meau, the decisive factor in the selection of a female partner is not the social position, but the physical characteristics of the girl. When I asked a Meau who would [732] [143] marry a stupid girl -- it was a case of cretinism, which occurs rather frequently -- he answered me briefly and characteristically: "A stupid man," even though in this case the girl belonged to a powerful and rich sib. The fact that girls at the [585] [614] moment of marriage completely give up their connection with their sib and enter the sib of the husband may play an important role in this. Among the girls of the Meau, on the other hand, even though they are not concerned specifically about the social position of the man, there are other significant factors that are not connected with sexuality. This is indicated in the reply of girls whom I questioned about the type of man they would like to have. In one form or another the answer was always: "Clever and strong, in order to master life." Not a single one put any value on a handsome or "dashing" man. The closeness to nature of the Meau permits the girls to see clearly what proficiency in the primeval forest life means. To be sure, I never met a single incompetent man among the Meau. The stern laws of nature would soon cause him to disappear from this society.

595 833 513 Married people customarily have sexual union at night in their bedroom. In answer to my question as to what the other wives do if the husband, who shares his bed with all of his wives, bestows his attention on one, my informant said: "The others

/91 cont./

595 sleep." Another gave the opinion: "He enjoys himself with
833 several at the same time"; a third said: "The others look on."
513 Even though, as I /92/ could observe, the natives sleep so soundly as a rule that one can pull the sleeping mats from under the body or, as I literally experienced, can fire a gun without awakening them, still I cannot believe that young wives in particular sleep as soundly as my informants maintained. However, that may be, in any case it is certain that a woman never has intercourse with several men at the same time; the reverse is more likely.

183 As has been mentioned, among the Meau the public de-
836 mands chastity of young girls in order that the young men,
[562] whose marriage is desired as early as possible, will soon decide to take this step. This demand is untenable, however, for, on the one hand, the young men, as was discussed in detail, enjoy
[584] complete freedom, and, on the other hand, it is the boy who chooses a girl to marry. Since the girls, however, are censured only if caught in the act, they generally have no objection to premarital sexual intercourse, which they secretly submit to against the wish and will of their parents, although maintaining secrecy is very difficult if only for external reasons, in view of the smallness of the Meau villages. In fact, my informants laconically answered my question as to what they would do if they discovered that their daughters were having a love affair: "We could do nothing if there were no consequences." As far
[582] as I was able to observe, the girls take advantage of this situation, depending upon when they marry, which is usually at the age of twenty or twenty-one. Lajonquière (1) and Abadie (2),

1. II, p. 315.

2. Page 151.

for instance, write that "the virtue of the girls is not beyond reproach," and that in practice the Meau attach little importance to this fact.